

Aim and Learning Objectives

The aim of this training session is to raise awareness of child protection and safeguarding in your school. By the end of this training session you will:

- Have an understanding of your school's policy/ procedures in relation to safeguarding/child protection
- Be able to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse
- Know what to do if you have safeguarding or child protection concerns
- Have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of key people in your school in relation to safeguarding and child protection

Introduction: A Cause for Concern

What would you do in the situation of the school meals' supervisor?

What would you do next in the situation of the crossing patrol person?

If you later learned that the child in the corridor often did this, and some colleagues thought it simply a means of getting attention, would you act differently?

If you learned that the child who asked for more dinner often did this, but invariably never ate the food, would you act differently?

Your School's Policy

Your school's policy states:

- The importance of the child;
- The school's understanding of what constitutes abuse;
- What to do if you think a child may be a victim of abuse;
- The name of the Designated Teacher and the Deputy Designated Teacher with responsibility for child protection; and
- What to do in the absence of the Designated Teacher.

Your School's Policy

Are you familiar with your school's policy?

Are you confident that you know how to act and when?

Are you familiar with what constitutes abuse?

Do you know who the Designated Teacher and the Deputy Designated Teacher in your school is?

Signs and Symptoms

Child abuse means ill treatment or neglect leading to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm.

The following illustrations outline common indicators of abuse and neglect.

These signs are not a checklist, indeed many of them could have other explanations.

Signs and Symptoms

Physical Abuse - Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries

Signs and Symptoms

Physical Abuse - Behavioural Indicators

- Self destructive tendencies
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Reluctant to have physical contact
- Clothing inappropriate to weather - worn to hide part of the body

Signs and Symptoms

Neglect - Physical Indicators

- Constant hunger
- Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Emaciation/distended stomach
- Constant tiredness

Signs and Symptoms

Neglect - Behavioural Indicators

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Lack of social relationships
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging
- Frequently absent or late
- Low self-esteem

Signs and Symptoms

Emotional Abuse - Physical Indicators

- Sudden speech disorder
- Signs of mutilation
- Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness)
- Wetting and/or soiling
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Poor peer relationships

Signs and Symptoms

Emotional Abuse - Behavioural Indicators

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Reluctance for parent liaison
- Fear of new situations
- Chronic runaway
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations

Signs and Symptoms

Sexual Abuse - Physical Indicators

- Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes
- Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
- Unexplained pregnancies

Signs and Symptoms

Sexual Abuse - Behavioural Indicators

- Be chronically depressed/suicidal
- Inappropriately seductive or precocious
- Sexually explicit language
- Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence
- Recurring nightmares/fear of the dark
- Outbursts of anger/hysteria
- Overly protective to siblings

Signs and Symptoms

Are you confident that you will recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse?

What Should You Do?

What to do when you have cause for concern:

- **RECEIVE** – listen to what a child says but do not ask leading questions except when to show you have understood;
- **REASSURE** – ensure the child is reassured that he/she will be safe and their interests come first;
- **RESPOND** – only to ensure that the child is safe and secure;
- **RECORD** – make note of what you have seen or heard and the date and time; and
- **REFER** – refer to the Designated Teacher as soon as you have any concern for a child.

What Should You Do?

Are you aware of what to do if only a suspicion has arisen?

Are you clear on what you should and should not say to a child for whom you have concern?